

# *Plain Facts About* <sup>1905.</sup> *Tuberculosis*

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**Names.**—Consumption, decline, debility, phthisis, hectic fever are some of its general names. It may affect particular parts of the body and then be called by special names, as scrofula, hydrocephalus or water on the brain, lumbar abscess, iliac abscess, ischio-rectal abscess, Fistula-in-ano, white swelling, bone caries, Potts' disease or hunch-back, hip-joint disease and lupus.

**Contagion.**—Tuberculosis is a communicable disease caused by the tubercle bacillus, a minute vegetable organism. It is *always contracted from another* suffering from the disease.

**Colds.**—*It never comes from a cold*, though a cold may first draw attention to it.

**Heredity.**—*It is not hereditary.* It is found most commonly in children of consumptives because they are more exposed to contagion.

**Implantation.**—The bacillus *gets in by the nose, mouth or an open wound.* Wherever implanted it produces little nodules called tubercles. These may grow in size. They may soften, break open and be expelled, leaving behind an ulcer or a cavity, bacilli being left in the walls of the ulcer to continue the disease.

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**Cure.**—In cure nature throws a wall of scar tissue about the tubercle or cavity. This wall becomes gradually thicker and thicker, growing towards the centre until nothing is left but a scar. This means *perfect cure*.

**Relapse.**—Until the scar is thoroughly formed, it may break down at any time leaving the bacilli free to continue their action at that place and a *relapse ensues*.

**Poisoning.**—While developing the disease the germs manufacture a *poison* which *circulates in the blood*, causing fever, increase in pulse rate, chills, sweats, stomach disturbances and wasting.

**Contributory Causes.**—Though the tubercle bacillus is the sole cause of the disease there are several things which favor its development. The majority of people in good health are not susceptible. Anything tending to lower vitality improves the soil for the development of this little vegetable. *Therefore poor and insufficient food, over-work, alcoholism, worry, dissipation, surroundings like a damp, dark or overcrowded dwelling, severe diseases like typhoid fever, repeated colds, etc., all tend to make a person susceptible to the disease.*

**Incurable Cases.**—*When the disease is far advanced and has affected the greater part of a vital organ or parts of many organs it is incurable.*

**Curable Cases.**—*In earlier stages the majority of cases can be cured.*

**Mode of Cure.**—For cure the first thing necessary is to build the patient up to a perfect state of physical health. This is accomplished by *rest, regular life, fresh air and good nourishment.*

**Rest.**—If the disease is active or advanced, *rest*, even rest in bed, may be *necessary*. In any case the patient must stop work and exercise, until the pulse and temperature are under 100. He should return to work only on the advice of a physician. The patient should always have 9 hours sleep, retiring before 10 P. M.

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**Fresh Air.**—He must sleep alone and when possible in a room alone. The *windows* of the sleeping room should be *kept wide open day and night*, no matter what the weather. The idea is to make every inhalation one of unbreathed air. During the day the patient must spend as much time as possible out-of-doors.

**Diet.**—The diet should be generous, nourishing and easily digestible. The most nourishing food we possess is *milk, raw eggs, raw or rare beef* and beefsteak. The more the patient consumes of these the quicker he will build up.

**Alcohol.**—*Alcohol* (whiskey, brandy, wines and beer) is *especially harmful*.

**Prevention.**—*In all cases, contagion to others can be prevented.* The contagion or the germs are contained in the discharge from a tuberculosis sore, therefore in cases of lung tuberculosis in the sputum. The germs are very small and frequently millions of them are spit up in a single day.

**Sputum.**—*If the patient is careful with his sputum he is harmless; if he is careless, he is dangerous to others and also to himself.* In tuberculosis spitting is one of nature's methods of getting rid of the germs. The patient should, therefore, never swallow his sputum for fear of infecting other parts of the body. He should wear no beard or mustache to which particles of spit might adhere and be inhaled or swallowed. The hands should be washed and the mouth rinsed before eating.

**Spitting.**—*To protect himself and others he should never spit* where the sputum may dry and be swept into the air as powdered dust which may be inhaled. He should never spit on the floor, wall, carpet, stove or sidewalk.

**Handkerchiefs.**—He should not spit into rags or handkerchiefs, since he contaminates the hands, face and clothes with them

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**Spit Cups.**—The only things a consumptive should use to receive sputum are *spit cups* and *paper napkins*. If the spit cups are made of paper they should be burned; if of China or metal they should contain a solution of lye (ordinary household lye), be emptied into the hopper once or twice a day and boiled. Pocket sputum cups for use away from home may be obtained in drug stores. The lips should be wiped with paper napkins.

**Paper Napkins.**—When a spit cup is not at hand, paper napkins should be used for the sputum. These should be used only once and put into a paper bag and burned.

**Coughing and Sneezing.**—When coughing or sneezing spit particles may be thrown out, and hence a paper napkin should be held before the lips.

**Breath.**—The *breath* of a consumptive *does not contain the germs* and will not produce the disease.

**Soiled Linen.**—The patient's soiled wash clothes and bed linen should be handled as little as possible and should be boiled before washing.

**Disinfection.**—Before a room which has been occupied by a consumptive is used again it should be *thoroughly cleansed*. The furniture, pictures and curtains should be removed to the yard and scrubbed; carpets should be raised and disinfected; the floor scrubbed and the walls scraped and re-papered.

**Advertised Cures.**—Consumptives are warned against the many widely advertised cures, specifics and special methods of treatment for consumption. No cure can be expected from any kind of medicine or method except the regularly accepted treatment which depends upon *pure air, an out-of-door life and nourishing food*.

1701 CHESTNUT ST.



PHILADELPHIA, PA.